

# WHAT WILL IT COST?

A VITAL AND FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION  
ANSWERED IN RELATION TO  
THE HUDSON BAY RAILWAY



BY. J. L. PAYNE

With Supplementary Comment on the Subject  
From THE SIMCOE REFORMER



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# HOW MUCH WILL THE HUDSON BAY RAILWAY COST CANADA?

## GETTING A FOUNDATION

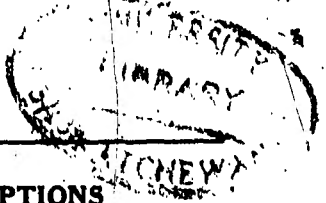
There are three basic aspects of the Hudson Bay Railway proposition, namely:—

- 1—The capital cost.
- 2—The question of rates.
- 3—The navigability of Hudson Strait.

The first two are closely associated. If the capital cost is very large, then, obviously, that fact must have a direct bearing on freight tolls, since the revenues must be sufficient to pay interest on investment as well as all operating expenses. It is therefore of prime importance that the probable cost of the road, when finished and equipped in all respects for operation, should be judicially considered.

This railway is an economic proposition, and must be judged like any other such proposition. Its primary cost is therefore vital. Capital cost creates an overhead of fixed charges, and, if those charges are out of proportion to earning power, the entire project collapses under the weight of its own economic unsoundness. That is the way every business man is compelled to deal with matters involving investment, and the situation is not changed when the investor is Government. There is no such thing as two economic principles—one for an individual and another for a nation. Economic law is constant and universal. For that supreme reason the capital cost of this railway becomes the core of the entire matter. Thus far the road has found its advocates among those who have based their judgment solely on the map. It is high time the thing were looked at from the commercial angle—the practical angle.

In making this further analytical study of one of the aspects of the Hudson Bay Railway problem, the writer is acting solely on his own initiative. He has not been prompted by any interest, political or otherwise. The motive behind this pamphlet is to try and save Canada from another grave blunder in her transportation policies.



## SOME UNWARRANTED ASSUMPTIONS

It seems to have been assumed by advocates of this project that 332 miles of the line have been completed, and that on the remaining 92 miles only ties and rails are required. This accounts for the low estimates which have been offered to the public, running all the way from \$600,000 to \$13,000,000. As a matter of fact, if these optimistic and ill-informed gentlemen had taken the trouble to read the official estimates brought down to Parliament they would have seen how far they were under the mark.

Unfortunately for those who have taken it for granted that a few million dollars would put this road in operation, it is a serious mistake to speak of 332 miles as being completed and 92 miles as lacking only the ties and steel. The 332 miles on which rails have been laid are very far from being in readiness for traffic; and as for the remaining 92 miles section, it is little more than a marked out right of way. All that had been done up to the time work was abandoned was to throw up a rough roadbed of peat, which rests on frozen ground. It is illuminatingly indicative of the wilderness through which this road passes that the soil never thaws out, and the only material available for the primary roadbed is peat; for it is a muskeg country, almost from end to end of the line.

While ties and rails were laid for 332 miles, this was done on a wholly temporary basis in order to serve the purpose of getting construction material over the line. The roadbed was not banked up, as would be imperatively necessary under heavy traffic conditions, and very little, if any, ballast was used. Worse still, such construction work as was done between 1911 and 1917, owing to its essentially make-shift character among the peat bogs, has fallen into a very bad state. The ties have rotted into the ground. The rails are badly rusted, and it would be utterly impossible to run the lightest kind of train over them. Therefore, an enormous amount of work would need to be done, and the cost would need to be heavy. The whole 332 miles would practically have to be rebuilt.

If even a layman paused to think, he would see at once that a railway in first class condition when abandoned would suffer enormous deterioration during nine years of neglect. But this railway was not finished when it was abandoned—very far from it—and, in a muskeg country like the Hudson Bay district, would be peculiarly exposed to injury. As a matter of fact, it has become little more than a right of way, and must be re-constructed from end to end.

If a farmer undertook to do a big job of teaming, he would have to think about his equipment. He would want healthy horses, strong harness and a good wagon. He wouldn't dream of trying

the thing with a vehicle that had but one wheel. And that idea fits to this railway project. There must be a sound roadbed, adequate motive power and all the things that make for efficient operation. No single link in the chain is more important than another. The railway itself could not serve without transfer facilities at Port Nelson, and, finally, there must be ships. At present there is not even a railway. There is nothing but a make-shift line of rails laid down for 332 miles, utterly unfit, without further large outlay, to do business.

The writer has gone to a great deal of trouble to get at the facts with regard to the cost of putting the road in operating shape, and he proposes in this review to present them for the consideration of all who desire to know the truth in this matter of the Hudson Bay Railway.

### THE COST OF COMPLETION

If reference is made to page 40 of Return Nos. 234 and 234A—1924, as brought down to Parliament, it will be found that the Resident Engineer estimated the cost of completing the railway at \$5,000,000. That referred solely to the so-called "unfinished" 92 miles. It omitted:—

- 1—New ties on the 332 miles section.
- 2—Ballasting and banking.
- 3—Stations, and telegraphic equipment at each, as well as section and tool houses.
- 4—Side-tracks and switches for 84 passing points.
- 5—Motive power and rolling stock.
- 6—Terminal facilities at Le Pas and elsewhere.

### NEW TIES.

The life of a tie under favorable conditions is from 7 to 9 years. As most of the ties in the so-called "finished" section have been in the ground for more than thirteen years, they have now practically disappeared. In 1922, the Resident Engineer reported to headquarters in Ottawa: "The ties in the first 214 miles north of The Pas have been in place for nine years, and are so rotten that unless something is done, etc." That was nearly four years ago. Today every tie from end to end of the 332 miles will have to be replaced. The cost, at \$1.30 per tie, in the track, 3,000 to the mile, would not be less than \$1,294,800. It might easily be \$1,500,000, and probably will be.

## BALLASTING AND BANKING

A railway cannot operate efficiently without a sound roadbed. A temporary foundation of peat is useless. There must not only be a properly banked roadway of sufficient width, but an adequately ballasted roadway as well. Such conditions are elementary in railroading; and the Hudson Bay Railway has neither. It cannot get along without both. It would have to be operated intensively for two months each year, and that could only be done on a safe and satisfactory roadbed. Experts have been consulted in this matter and they place the cost of ballasting and bank-widening at \$1,992,000.

## STATIONS, SIDE-TRACKS, ETC.

Items 3 and 4 might be considered together. Mr. M. J. Butler, Deputy Minister of Railways and Canals from 1904 to 1910, laid out the original plan for the operation of the Hudson Bay Railway, and its fundamental feature was a system of ten-mile blocks, at which loaded trains going East would pass empty trains going West. Thus there would be 42 such blocks, with 84 passing points, one every five miles, and that means 42 telegraph stations, properly equipped. Nothing of that nature has thus far been provided nor included in the estimates. It is absolutely essential, and the cost would be at least \$3,327,800.

## MOTIVE POWER AND ROLLING STOCK

There is room for argument as to whether or not rolling stock would be required for the Hudson Bay Railway. Theoretically, grain would be delivered to it by other railways, and the cars of those roads would be moved to Port Nelson and then returned. Nevertheless, it would need a good deal of equipment for its own purposes; yet, for the sake of avoiding controversial points, the matter of general service cars is being laid aside.

There is, however, an important fact to be borne in mind. If the Hudson Bay Railway used the cars of other roads, the usual and unavoidable per diem charge would amount to \$181,500 for the hauling of 24,500,000 bushels of wheat; and that sum, capitalized at 4½ per cent., is the equivalent of \$4,030,000. If the railway provided its own cars, it would take 4,520 box units, at \$3,000 each, or \$13,560,000 in all.

But motive power is another matter. Beyond all question the road would have to provide its own locomotives. It could not borrow them from the Canadian National, because during the harvest-moving period the Government system could not possibly spare a single unit. Mr. Butler's plan of operation contemplated one train per hour moving eastward and a similar train, though empty, mov-

ing westward. It happens, however, that on a normal railway at least 10 per cent. of all locomotives in service are in the shops for repairs. All railways have that experience the world over. And there must also be switching engines. So that, at least 74 modern high-power locomotives would have to be purchased along with 66 cabooses. The minimum cost would be \$3,508,200.

### TERMINAL REQUIREMENTS

From several angles, the situation as to terminal requirements rises far above the matter of the railway itself; and, while that has reference chiefly to Port Nelson, the western terminus is but secondary in importance. In this instance, common sense must be used. If 24,500,000 bushels of grain are to be delivered to the Hudson Bay Railway at Le Pas during the short season of operation, very considerable facilities would be required at that point. There would have to be a large train yard, a turntable, switches, a round-house and so on. There would also have to be two intermediate terminals. Business could not be done without them.

At present there is nothing of that nature at Le Pas or elsewhere, and the \$5,000,000 estimate of the Resident Engineer does not include the necessary lay-out. It would cost a large sum of money. Competent authorities place the amount at \$4,675,000.

### SUMMARIZING COST

Let us now turn back for a moment and bring all these items together, bearing in mind that all costs in the Hudson Bay district are from 80 to 200 per cent. above eastern figures. They are:—

Mr. McLachlan's estimate .....	\$5,000,000
New ties .....	1,294,800
Ballasting and banking .....	1,992,000
Side-tracks, stations, etc. ....	3,327,800
Motive power, etc. ....	3,508,200
Terminals at Le Pas, etc. ....	4,675,000
Water tanks, etc. ....	195,000

Total .....	\$19,992,800
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The reader may rest assured, that not one of the foregoing items would be brought into the calculation if there were the slightest doubt as to their having been omitted from Mr. McLachlan's estimate of \$5,000,000. And every one of these is as essential as are the rails. We must now move on to Port Nelson, where the chief expenditure will have to be made.

## THE PORT NELSON TERMINAL

The line from Le Pas to Port Nelson might be completed and put into operating shape, and yet the Hudson Bay Railway would be utterly useless unless it had the required facilities at the eastern terminal. On them everything would depend. But Port Nelson is not a natural harbor. It is simply the broad estuary of the Nelson River, and no vessel has yet been able to get nearer than twenty miles of it. Seaward is a long stretch of mud flats, which are kept in perpetual agitation by the flow of the river and the tides. To get ships up to any dock which might be built would call not only for a tremendous amount of primary dredging, but constant dredging ever afterward. Here is an enlightening passage from an official report of the Resident Engineer, dated at Port Nelson, July 11, 1917:—

"The cut made by the suction dredge last October is now practically obliterated. . . . A very rough calculation shows that about half a million yards of silting has taken place."

So it was year after year. The "cut" here referred to by the Resident Engineer is but a fraction of what would ultimately be required; and every foot of it would be subject to silting—many millions of cubic yards per annum. It would have to be removed every year. To dredge a sufficient channel, the Resident Engineer estimated would cost \$6,255,000; but he also makes it clear that, in order to keep it open, the dredges would have to work constantly during the period when such work would be practicable. He gives his estimate of the cost of transfer facilities at Port Nelson as follows:—

Dredging . . . . .	\$6,255,000
Dock . . . . .	7,116,000
Elevator . . . . .	8,400,000
Port equipment . . . . .	300,000
Total . . . . .	\$22,071,000

We may be sure the necessary work could not be done for less. Engineers are not in the habit of over-estimating. So we start with that rather fearsome sum of \$22,071,000 as representing the cost of what will have to be done at Port Nelson in order to enable the railway to function. But Mr. McLachlan has confined his figures strictly to Port Nelson. Mr. H. W. A. Johnson, a Director of the Manitoba Farmers' Union, has taken up other needs of the situation. They are: \$1,000,000 for lighthouses in the straits; \$500,000 for lighthouse tenders; and \$500,000 for an airplane service—a total of \$2,000,000 additional. Certainly all these things are necessary, although the airplane service is strikingly suggestive of the extraordinary characteristics of this Hudson Bay route.

Every item in Mr. McLachlan's estimate relates to an imperative necessity. Without a port the railway would be useless; and without a channel, dock and elevator there could not be a port. So now we can bring expenditure and estimated outlay together and see what is the total. Here are the figures:—

Already expended .....	\$20,745,164
To complete railway .....	19,992,800
Mr. Johnson's additions .....	2,000,000
Port Nelson terminal .....	22,071,000
Total .....	\$64,808,964

That would be the capital outlay chargeable to the railway, and would mean \$152,851 per mile. Only by comparison can we realize the magnitude of these figures. The Canadian Pacific carries a capitalization of but \$45,000 per mile, including its common stock, and the Canadian National a little over \$96,000.

And yet the people talk about the Hudson Bay Railway lowering rates! The plain and indisputable truth is that interest charges alone, at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., would amount to \$2,916,403 per annum, or \$6,878 per mile of line, while every penny the road could earn, if operated to its full capacity and at present rates, would fall below \$1,750,000. The fixed charges of every nature carried by the Canadian Pacific, including rentals, are but \$938 per mile.

### THE COST OF SHIPS

Professor D. A. MacGibbon, of the University of Alberta, in an address before a convention of agricultural societies at Saskatoon, on January 14th last, said on this subject of the Hudson Bay Railway:—"All reports agree that vessels of a special type are needed to withstand floating ice. This means a ship of added cost and lessened capacity." No matter what it may mean, it is the truth. The ordinary ship of commerce could not navigate Hudson Straits. It might do so at rare times; but, if a satisfactory ocean service is to be provided, Hon. Frank Cochrane long ago decided, after adequate investigation, that vessels of special construction would have to be built and operated by the Government. Prohibitive insurance rates for other ships would make that necessary if appalling ice conditions did not.

Two questions at once arise: How many specially-constructed ships would be required? What would be their cost?

We are here in contact with certain ascertained facts. In an official report to his Department, the Resident Engineer of the Hudson Bay Railway declared that the capacity of the road was 24,500,-



000 bushels of grain per season, and that each steamer could make two round trips. We therefore have definite factors upon which to work. Moreover, it has been agreed that vessels of 7,000 tons would be the absolute limit in such waters, where much manoeuvring would have to be done among the ice. Early investigators placed the maximum at 2,000 tons; but these figures have since been raised—possibly too high.

Each ship of 7,000 tons, of that class, would be able to transport 200,000 bushels per voyage, and, as she could make but two round trips, it would require 61 steamers to handle 24,500,000 bushels of grain. Very great care has been taken in consulting the highest authorities as to the probable cost of such ships, and the lowest estimate is \$500,000 each. Thus 61 vessels would represent a total cost of \$30,500,000. Other estimates raise the figures to \$35,000,000.

### THE FINAL SUMMARY

To the cost of the railway and its Port Nelson terminal, as well as necessary aids to navigation, must be added \$30,500,000 for ships. Our final total is \$95,308,964

Let no one suspect that this estimate is exaggerated. It is unquestionably too low. In such a large undertaking as this all experience teaches us that the actual cost invariably runs far ahead of the primary estimate. The unforeseen always arises, and it is in every instance adverse.

And now some sobering thoughts force themselves into the matter. For what would this enormous capital outlay be incurred? The answer is: To try an experiment which is beyond all doubt doomed to failure. That is not the conclusion of the writer. It was the deliberate judgment of the Resident Engineer of the Hudson Bay Railway, after years of experience at Port Nelson and a painstaking study of the problem in all its aspects. It is to be found in two or three of his official reports. And he was right.

If the farmers of Manitoba and Saskatchewan did not believe that the Hudson Bay Railway would give them lower rates on export wheat, we should not hear a further word about this subject. And yet, when all the factors are brought together, and judicially surveyed, the conclusion is absolutely irresistible that freight tolls would have to be three or four times higher than they now are if this road is to earn its operating expenses and fixed charges. To the unbiased mind it is as clear as noonday that, if an attempt is made to complete and operate the Hudson Bay Railway, the loss which will fall on the public treasury will be enormous. It will at least amount to \$6,000,000 per annum on the railway and as much more on the ships.

How could it be possible to operate the relatively costliest road on this continent for two months in the year, under conditions which in every way make for abnormal expense, without incurring a heavy annual loss? On one side you have an earning power which could not possibly create a revenue of more than \$1,750,000, and on the other fixed charges of \$2,916,403. Operating expenses would be exceedingly high, and would swell the deficit. What it would cost to keep the channel at Port Nelson dredged nobody knows; but it would certainly be much more than gross earnings.

Apart from the financial aspect, the pivotal fact in this whole matter is the date at which Hudson Straits are closed. There is a conflict of testimony as to when they are open, in the navigating sense, but there is an absolute agreement as to the time at which they are shut. The Resident Engineer fixed it at 20th October; and taking one year with another, that is the limit. What does it mean? It simply means that the shipping limit in Manitoba and Saskatchewan would be 5th October. In the whole history of the western provinces there has never once been 20,000,000 bushels of grain ready to be exported by that date. The facts in that regard can be easily checked up. The grain is simply not available for export that early. When, then, would this railway get its traffic, And who would be served by the movement of say five per cent. of the season's harvest by the proposed new route?

If all that is possible were done, we are thrown back on the undeniable fact that the Hudson Bay Railway would be closed before more than a very insignificant percentage of the season's crop could be got in motion for export; and yet people otherwise sane, are proposing to go ahead with a project which would require at least \$95,000,000 of primary capital outlay to get it in operating shape. Surely at some point, before it is too late, reason and everyday business sense will be asserted.

Looking calmly at our financial obligations, can we be indifferent to the economic truth in any project which may be submitted to our judgment? Why should a nation be asked to do a thing which an individual, or a group of individuals, would not for a moment dream of doing? These are pertinent questions, and the people of Canada as a whole must answer them. If we have a very grave railway problem on our hands, it is because we refused to reckon the cost before we plunged into unsound ventures. Our chastisement will have been in vain if, with our eyes wide open, we blunder again.

## ANOTHER RAILWAY FOLLY

An Editorial From The Simcoe Reformer of February 18, 1926

What is the truth concerning the Hudson Bay Railway? With the proposal of the Government to carry the undertaking to completion, the question has assumed a position of paramount importance in the mind of every thinking Canadian. Further, a sharp division of opinion undoubtedly prevails throughout Canada as to the merits of the scheme. In many instances advocates and opponents of the project are alike blinded by their own selfish interests, expounding their views and theories with relation only to the benefits or the injurious effects, as the case may be, which will result to their own particular business or their own part of the country, if the line is completed. Sectional viewpoints should play no part in such a discussion. The problem is national in scope and must therefore be dealt with from a national angle, having regard only to the welfare of the Dominion as a whole.

What the people of Canada want in connection with the Hudson Bay Railway is facts, and plenty of them. Every taxpayer in the Dominion will feel the burden of the staggering expenditure necessary to complete the line, and for that reason Canadians are entitled to a clear, unbiased presentation of the facts. But the public has waited in vain for any pronouncement from the Government. For some unknown reason the facts, if any, that justify completion of the line are still obscure so far as the majority of us are concerned. Fortunately, facts to the contrary have not been so lacking, and most Canadians by this time have heard of serious objections to the scheme. Probably the most complete and convincing refutation of the Hudson Bay Railway in its entirety is contained in an illuminating article appearing in The Calgary Herald, and written voluntarily by J. L. Payne of Ottawa, a student of railway economics, who has given ten years of close study to this specific problem, uninfluenced by anybody or any considerations but the truth.

Mr. Payne quotes such authorities as D. W. McLachlan, resident engineer at Port Nelson, who has thoroughly investigated every phase of the situation, and Samuel P. Dunn, editor of the Railway Age, and one of the world's foremost authorities on transportation, who has made an exhaustive study of the question. Mr. McLachlan, in reporting to the Government, declared: "I HAVE NO LONGER ANY HESITATION IN SAYING THE HUDSON BAY RAILWAY IS DOOMED TO CERTAIN FAILURE."

Mr. Dunn says editorially:—

"The Hudson Bay Railway is one of the most chimerical transportation projects ever conceived. The people of Canada would much better dump \$75,000,000 into Hudson Bay than carry it out. If it is carried out they will lose not only their original investment, but millions of dollars every year in addition."

When two such men as these, with all the facts at their finger tips, are thus outspoken in their condemnation of the undertaking, will the parliamentary representatives of Canadian taxpayers be loyal to their trust in plunging blindly into a scheme foreordained to failure and involving many millions of the people's money? Because a former Government committed an act of unpardonable folly, is that sufficient reason why incalculable sums of good money should now be sent after bad?

Read a few of the facts embodied in Mr. Payne's studied presentation. The sum of \$20,859,318, exclusive of interest charges, has already been expended on the road. Ninety-two of a total of 424 miles of railway remain to be built. According to the computation of Mr. McLachlan, the resident engineer, it would cost to complete the railway, to dredge Port Nelson, to build a dock and an elevator and to provide port equipment and lighthouses the sum of \$27,071,000. Further, Mr. McLachlan reported in 1922:

"The ties in the first 264 miles north of The Pas have been in place for nine years, and are so rotten that unless something is done towards their replacement, the present heavy locomotive and standard cars operated on this section of the line will some day leave The Pas and never return." To which Mr. Payne adds: "As a matter of fact, the ties on the entire 332 miles of completed road are by this time absolutely useless and must be replaced. That would cost \$1,112,000, and raise Mr. McLachlan's estimate to \$28,183,000."

The cost of specially constructed ships necessary for navigation of Hudson Bay would be \$20,000,000 (a minimum estimate), which with the expense of aids to navigation amounting to \$250,000, would mean an aggregate total of \$48,443,000 needed to complete the project. Canada's investment in the Hudson Bay would therefore be approximately \$70,000,000.

"How long would the Hudson Straits be open to navigation each year? Obviously that is the key to the entire situation," observes Mr. Payne. The answer is found in illustrations showing ice-breakers forcing their way through heavy ice (in some cases 40

feet thick) during the "open season" of navigation in the month of August, and depicting the entire channel covered with exceedingly heavy icebergs early in October. Pre-supposing the most favorable possible weather conditions, Mr. McLachlan, the resident engineer, places the season of navigation from 20th August to 20th October. Moreover, after a great deal of trouble, he has worked out the maximum wheat-carrying capacity of the proposed route for a single season at 24,500,000 bushels. Generally speaking about 200 million bushels are shipped each year through Fort William. But the Port Nelson route could not handle it for the simple reason that the great bulk of the crop is not ready for shipment until the Hudson Straits have rendered navigation impossible.

On the basis of this statement, which is easily supported by all available figures, the total earning of the Hudson Bay Railway for a single season would be \$1,728,241, which includes rates on all imports to Western Canada. These earnings would be eaten up immediately by interest at four per cent. on the capital investment of \$47,930,318, which sum excludes the cost of ships. Whence, then, would the operating expenses and the capital cost of ships come? Again, on the basis of Mr. McLachlan's calculation, it is probable that the mere expense of keeping the roadbed in operating condition would be equal to total revenues. That the Hudson Bay Railway could not carry a sufficient volume of traffic to materially benefit the wheat growers of the West is convincingly demonstrated by a glance at the road's carrying capacity of 24,500,000 bushels, as compared with the western wheat crop of 400,385,000 bushels for 1925. At the most the railway could only take care of five per cent. of the crop. In this regard Mr. McLachlan points out that while it now costs \$12.17 per long ton by the present route between Humboldt and Montreal, and would cost \$10.96 when the new Welland Canal is completed, the cost by way of Port Nelson would be \$12.63. He therefore concludes that "AS A GRAIN ROUTE, THE HUDSON BAY RAILWAY IS OF NO VALUE TO WESTERN CANADA."

Such is the wagon to which the Federal Government has hitched its cart. Surely the voice of Canadian taxpayers will be raised in loud and emphatic protest against this mad epilogue of Canadian railway extravaganza.

## A TAXPAYER'S VIEW

**A Letter Appearing in The Simcoe Reformer of February 25, 1926**

Port Dover, February 23, 1926

Editor, Simcoe Reformer,

Dear Sir:—

Your issue of Feb. 18th carried an editorial on the Hudson Bay Railway that should be of vast importance to every citizen of Canada. It should appear on the front page of every newspaper in the country, and if possible be printed in sheet form and sent into every home from Coast to Coast. Further it should be preached from every pulpit, in fraternal organizations, as well as Canadian Clubs, until it would become a voice on every lip, protesting against such "wild" expenditure of Public money.

In the Toronto Globe of Feb. 20th, there appeared an article which stated that the appropriation for the building of this road, or rather the completion of it, will appear in the general estimates in order to prevent its being vetoed by the Senate, which it is feared it would be were the estimate brought down separately, but if brought down as a part of other estimates the Senate cannot do anything with it without holding up the whole thing.

It has been said that the Senate are of no use, but if the body of men that constitute it could be the means of destroying the effort of Parliament to put this unreasonable, uncalled for and insane deal over, it would fully warrant its existence for all time to come, even tho it should never do one other thing, and it is to be hoped that it will do so, even if it has to hold up the entire estimates of the Country for a year.

Much has been written against the proposal, many letters have appeared in the press, but your editorial is the only one I have noticed, and supported as it was by reliable Engineers who had reported to the Government the utter impossibility of the scheme, one would think that no political party would lend an ear to it, not even think of squandering more millions on a "blue sky" proposition, and notwithstanding the fact that Premier King is reported to have said to the electorate of the Western Provinces last October, "you send enough men to Ottawa to support me, and I will furnish enough dollars to complete the Hudson Bay Railway," it should not be completed to remain a monument to political whims.

Canada has enough railways now that are not paying their way. Canada has spent enough millions now in political cesspools. The

Canadian people are round-shouldered from carrying the burden of taxation due to ineffective expenditure of their funds, and it is time for a change, and there must be a change, if this great Dominion is to reap the full benefit of its vast endowments.

Your editorial shows in detail why this road should not be completed, and it is up to the people of the Dominion of Canada to see that it is not done. Some years ago one Government in its "wisdom" began to dig what is known as the Newmarket Canal. They dug, and they built elaborate concrete piers, and they dug until they ran out of water to float their dredges, and there it remains a "dry ditch", useless in every sense of the word. It would be silly and almost criminal to go ahead and complete that "Canal" and it would be just the same to go ahead and spend one more dollar on the Hudson Bay Railway. If the present Premier or any other chooses to go thru the country casting his political "manna" before the electors of any district, let him be responsible personally for finding the cash to cover the demand he created, and not have one cent of it come from the public funds.

The writer was particularly interested in your comment on the question, because of personal acquaintance with seamen who went into the "Bay" some years ago to obtain data for the Government as to the feasibility of the proposed route.

In conversation with them on their return (I am sorry I cannot use the language they did, here) they said that from a Sailor's viewpoint the scheme was absolutely impossible, and completely voiced the sentiment of the engineer you quote.

Every natural condition is against it, and every other condition too, except the unnatural one of twenty-four "Progressive M.P.'s" snapping their whip and bringing the Treasury benches to the scratch. They are the ones that favour this scheme, and they are the ones that are not in a position to say whether or not the Arctic Seas are practicable for navigation.

Shipowners and Shipbuilders know that it is not. Underwriters know that it is not, and above all the men that navigate the ships of the Empire know that it is not, and in the final analysis they alone are the men that have to get their ships to and from every port, and always much is demanded of them.

In the palatial corridors of the "House" at Ottawa, Hudson Bay may be spoken of as glibly as Halifax or Montreal. But those that fight their battle above sixty degrees North Latitude know of the difference.

CAPT. P. O. ROBINSON.

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